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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1 and 8 and please cancel claims 6, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 14-17 without prejudice or disclaimer. The following listing of claims will replace all prior listings, and versions, of the claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) An immunoassay for detecting the presence of a water-sparingly-soluble/hardly extractable protein in a sample, comprising the steps of:

(1) extracting and/or solubilizing a water-sparingly-soluble/hardly extractable protein in a sample with an aqueous solvent containing a reducing agent and an ionic surfactant to provide a protein solution, wherein the reducing agent is 2-mercaptoethanol, dithiothreitol, or a mixture thereof, wherein the ionic surfactant is selected from the group consisting of sodium dodecyl sulfate, lithium dodecyl sulfate, sodium lauryl sarcosine, hexadecyltrimethyl ammonium bromide, hexadecyltrimethyl ammonium chloride, hexadecyl pyridinium chloride, and a mixture thereof, ~~[[and]]~~ wherein the concentration of the ionic surfactant in the aqueous solvent is higher than 0.3% (W/V), and wherein the protein solution is boiled at least at 80 °C for 5 minutes,

(2) providing an immunogen for raising an antibody against the water-sparingly-soluble/hardly extractable protein to be detected, wherein the immunogen is prepared by dissolving said water-sparingly-soluble/hardly extractable protein in an aqueous solvent containing the same reducing agent and the same ionic surfactant as that contained in the aqueous solvent of step (1),

(3) preparing the antibody against the water-sparingly-soluble/hardly extractable protein to be detected by immunizing an animal with the immunogen provided in step (2) and obtaining the antibody from the immunized animal,

(4) adding the antibody of step (3) to the protein solution of step (1) or a dilution of the protein solution of step (1) to form a reaction mixture wherein the reaction mixture contains more than ~~[[0.03%]]~~ 0.3% (W/V) of the ionic surfactant contained in the aqueous solvent of step (1),

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(5) incubating the reaction mixture of step (4) to form an antigen-antibody complex between the water-sparingly-soluble/hardly extractable protein and the antibody in the presence of more than ~~[[0.03%]]~~ 0.3% (W/V) of the ionic surfactant contained in the aqueous solvent of step (1), and

(6) detecting the formed antigen-antibody complex.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously prevented) The assay according to claim 1, wherein the ionic surfactant is sodium dodecyl sulfate.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently amended) The assay according to ~~claim 7~~ claim 1, wherein the aqueous solvent in step (1) comprises 1% (W/V) sodium dodecyl sulfate and 1M 2-mercaptoethanol.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously presented) The assay according to claim 1, wherein the protein is selected from the group consisting of ovalbumin, ovomucoid,

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casein, β -lactoglobulin, buckwheat protein, wheat protein and peanut protein which are in a hardly extractable state.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)